

ShadowBound 97

Chapter 97: Light And Darkness

Mystica came to a stop under the shade of a sprawling tree, a wave of her hand conjuring a chair that seemed to materialize from the air itself. She gracefully lowered herself into it, crossing her legs as her eyes darted between Liam and Sheila.

"Now then, where shall we begin?" Mystica mused, her voice carrying an undercurrent of amusement. "Ah, I know. Let's start simple—tell me what each of you is capable of with your magic so far."

Her gaze settled on Sheila first. "You, Princess. How proficient are you with your light magic? I must admit, I don't have high expectations. The Crescent Kingdom is far more renowned for their expertise in ice and water manipulation, not light. So, tell me, what can you do?"

Sheila stiffened, her jaw tightening at Mystica's condescending tone. Her annoyance was palpable, but she took a steadying breath before responding.

"There are a few spells and techniques I've mastered. Specifically, two spells: Luminous Palm and Crystal-Frost Bolt, and two techniques: Radiant Step and Dawn Spear."

Mystica clapped her hands slowly, her expression a mixture of mockery and intrigue. "Oh, fascinating! A princess with not one, but four tools in her arsenal. How impressive."

Luminous Palm: A spell that channels myst into the user's hands, creating a soft, glowing aura capable of healing injuries. The extent of healing—be it minor cuts or major wounds—depends entirely on the mage's proficiency.

Crystal-Frost Bolt: A hybrid spell combining light magic and ice manipulation, forming glowing projectiles of frozen energy encased in shimmering light. The bolts cause minor damage but inflict a freezing impact that slows down opponents, making it ideal for strategic combat.

Radiant Step: A mobility technique where myst is channeled into the legs, propelling the user forward in a burst of energy. The movement leaves behind glowing trails of light designed to confuse and disorient enemies.

Dawn Spear: A technique that condenses myst into a spear-shaped construct of radiant light. The spear can be used as a melee weapon or thrown as a projectile for greater reach.

"Impressive, really," Mystica said with a smirk that suggested otherwise. "It seems Mommy and Daddy made sure their little princess was well-equipped. Such doting parents."

Sheila rolled her eyes, clearly uninterested in Mystica's mockery. "Are you finished?"

"Not quite," Mystica replied with a mischievous glint. She turned her attention to Liam. "And you, my dear shadowy Liam? What have you got?"

Liam's expression remained indifferent, his hands tucked into his pockets. "I've only mastered two techniques so far. Extraction and... I'm not sure if this counts, but I can store my daggers in the shadows."

Mystica's brows arched. "Ah, shadow storage? Yes, that's a technique—what we call Void Storage. It's the ability to store items in a personal void linked to your shadow. Quite useful."

She leaned back in her chair, her smirk widening. "But Extraction, hmm? That one is a little beyond your level, don't you think?"

"I'm aware," Liam said flatly, his tone as calm as ever.

"Good," Mystica said, nodding approvingly. "At least you know your limits."

Extraction: A high-level technique that allows Liam to summon and control shadow constructs by extracting the essence of defeated beings. While the process requires minimal myst to execute, maintaining and repairing the shadows during battle consumes significant myst reserves. Additionally, shadows which had special abilities when they were still living, like a dragon's fire breath, further drains myst rapidly.

Liam understood the risks all too well. While his arsenal of shadow beasts was extensive, he had to carefully manage how many he summoned in a fight. The myst cost of maintaining them—and the potential losses if they were destroyed—meant he couldn't afford recklessness.

"You've both managed to learn a lot, but there's still much more to uncover," Mystica said, her lips curling into a mischievous smirk.

Her eyes glinted with amusement as she leaned forward slightly in her chair. "But before we dive deeper, tell me—do either of you know the connection between your magics?"

Sheila crossed her arms, her eyes narrowing with suspicion. "What the hell are you trying to say now? That light magic has some kind of connection to dark magic?" Her tone was sharp, tinged with disdain as she shot a glance at Liam, then quickly turned her gaze back to Mystica.

"Exactly," Mystica said, her smirk widening into a grin as if she'd just revealed the punchline to a joke only she understood. "You catch on fast, princess."

Sheila scoffed, her irritation flaring. "That's ridiculous. Light is pure, radiant, and... good. Dark magic is the opposite—chaotic and destructive. They're nothing alike."

Mystica tilted her head, her expression both playful and condescending. "Oh, sweet child of light, your naivety is endearing. But let me educate you both."

She extended her hand, and a swirling sphere of myst formed in her palm, shifting between radiant golden light and inky black shadows. It pulsed like a heartbeat, its dual nature mesmerizing.

"Light and dark magic are not enemies," Mystica began, her voice soft yet commanding. "They are two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. Light illuminates, but without shadows, it would have no meaning. Darkness conceals, yet it gives depth and contrast to the brilliance of light."

Liam, still indifferent, became curious but ever slightly. "So you're saying they... complement each other?"

"Precisely," Mystica said, her tone laced with approval. "Think of them as partners in an eternal dance. Light magic thrives on structure and creation, bringing clarity and healing. But it lacks subtlety—it is often too direct, too rigid. Dark magic, on the other hand, revels in flexibility and destruction. It bends, it twists, it adapts. Alone, each has its strengths, but together... they achieve balance."

Sheila frowned, her pride unwilling to yield so easily. "Balance? Are you suggesting I—a practitioner of light magic—should learn from him?" She gestured toward Liam with disdain.

Mystica laughed, a rich, melodious sound that echoed through the room. "Oh, dear, I'm not suggesting. I'm telling you. If you want to master your respective magics, you'll need to understand the other's essence. Light without darkness is shallow, just as darkness without light is empty."

She paused, letting her words sink in before continuing. "When the two are combined, they can create extraordinary effects. For instance..." She raised her hand, and the sphere in her palm began to shift.

The light and shadow fused, creating a shimmering field of twilight energy that radiated both warmth and an eerie chill. "This is what happens when you learn to harmonize the two forces. It's not about making one stronger than the other—it's about finding equilibrium."

"So you're saying Sheila's light could strengthen my darkness, and my darkness could—"

"Enhance her light," Mystica finished, nodding. "Exactly. But it requires trust and collaboration, two things you both seem to struggle with." She turned her gaze to Sheila, her smirk returning. "Unless, of course, you'd rather let your pride get in the way of unlocking your full potential."

Sheila's jaw tightened, her eyes flashing with defiance. "I'd rather die than to do something so... abominable."

Mystica clapped her hands together, the sound sharp and echoing. "Well, can't say I expected anything else from you, Princess. You always were a stubborn one."

Her voice dripped with playful mockery. "I just wanted you two to understand the connection between your magical elements."

She gave a wicked grin, her gaze flicking between them. "Now, I would like to teach you both some new spell, but there is something else we must begin with."